

Dr. Faye Halpern

Fall '12

SS 1015

Tu., 10-12:30

Course Web Page: <http://blackboard.ucalgary.ca>

Office: SS 1108

**Office Hours: Mon. 9:30-11:30 and
by appointment**

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to e-mail)**

**FACULTY OF ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**

603.09-01 The American Slave Narrative: Visions and Revisions

Course Description

This course will examine the different ways American writers have represented “the peculiar institution” in the 19th century and today. We will look at 19th-century American slave narratives not as documents to be evaluated according to their historical accuracy but as persuasive texts trying to make certain understandings of race and injustice commonsensical. How did different authors represent the crime of slavery and how do contemporary literary critics make sense of their representations? We’ll end the course by considering some contemporary fictional revisions of these slave narratives. What has changed over time and what do those changes reveal about the way people have come to understand the crime of American slavery? The course will give its participants a sense of the historical trajectory of the American slave narrative, as well as an introduction to the criticism surrounding this genre. This course will also examine what goes into making a good critical argument with the aim of having its participants enact that advice in their own writing for the course.

Required Primary Texts (Available at the bookstore)

David Blight, ed., *A Slave No More* (Mariner Books)

Ishmael Reed, *Flight to Canada* (Scribner)

Hannah Crafts, *The Bondswoman’s Narrative* (Warner Books)

Valerie Martin, *Property* (Vintage)

Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (Norton Critical Edition)*

Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (Norton Critical Edition)

Edward P. Jones, *The Known World* (Amistad)

Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (Vintage)

*I suggest you buy the particular editions that are available at the bookstore, especially the Norton Critical editions, from which we will also be reading critical articles.

Course Requirements

Percentage of Final Grade

Reading Responses/Critical Annotations.....	15%
Class Participation, including participation in the workshop	5%
Class Facilitation.....	10%
Short Essay (5-7 pp.).....	25%
Research Paper, including the proposal (15-18 pp.).....	45%

Grading System

You must complete all written work to qualify for a passing grade.

For the components which are assigned letter grades (e.g., the essays, the class facilitation), I translate them into percentages to determine your final grade.

A+: 98.33%; A: 95%; A-:91.67%; B+: 88.33%; B: 85%; B-:81.67%; C+: 78.33%; C: 75%; C-: 71.67%; D+: 68.33%; D: 65%.; F: anything lower than 65%.

- Sometimes I'll assign a split grade (e.g., B-/C+). To find the numerical equivalent, I average the two grades (e.g., a B-/C+=80%).
- In computing the final grade, I round the percentage to the nearest equivalent, recognized letter grade (e.g., a 92% is an A-; a 94% is an A).
- All grades below B- are indicative of failure at the graduate level and cannot be counted toward Faculty of Graduate Studies course requirements.

Short Essay & Research Paper:

There will be two essays due over the course of the semester. The short essay asks you to offer a fairly brief, provocative argument about a primary text that takes up a question or argument by another critic. It is also tied to your facilitation: after you facilitate discussion on the primary text you choose, the short essay, on the same text, will be due a week and a half later. I'll assign a tentative grade to this short essay, but you'll have the option to revise it within 2 weeks of getting my comments back for a potentially higher grade (if your short paper is turned in towards the end of the semester, you might have a bit less time to revise it). The research paper, which caps the course, asks you to enter the critical conversation in a more thoroughgoing way around one of the texts or topics we've addressed in the course.

This seminar will emphasize scholarly writing: we'll discuss the critical articles not just for their content but for the moves they make, and we'll also spend time in class further articulating the elements of scholarly writing. To that end, we'll be workshoping drafts of each others' research papers towards the end of the semester.

Class Facilitation

Working either individually or in a team, everyone will participate in facilitating class discussion on one of the primary texts. More details on a separate handout.

Reading Responses/Critical Annotations

Generally, we will alternate reading primary texts and critical articles. Over the course of the semester, I'll ask you to write critical annotations of **two** of these critical articles (more details in a separate handout). You should also post on **Bb two** reading responses to the different primary texts we're going to read (apart from the one on which you write your short essay). The reading responses should be between 1 ½ and 3 pp. (300-750 words) and should be posted by **5 p.m. on Monday** to give us some time before the relevant class to read them (but if you can post earlier, that's great) and for me to incorporate the issues they raise into our discussion. The critical annotation will be due **Friday by 5 p.m.** after the class for which the article is assigned. I will not be grading individual reading responses and critical annotations, but I will be reading them

with great interest. If they appear thorough and thoughtful, you'll get full credit for them. If I detect a problem, I'll let you know so you can either revise or take less than full credit.

Class Participation/Participation in the Workshop

The success of the class depends on the liveliness and thoughtfulness of our discussions, and these depend on our listening carefully to each other and building on what has been said. Everyone has different preferences when it comes to how much talking they want to do in class, but do perform some self-surveillance and avoid the opposing poles of anxiety-inducing observer and dominating holder-forth.

As mentioned above, you will be workshopping your research paper with a couple of your classmates. I will ask you to send a draft to your workshop group the day after the last class, to write letters to the other people in your group commenting on their drafts, and then to meet sometime early the following week to discuss each other's drafts. By 5 p.m. on the day you meet, please send me a copy of the letters you wrote and a paragraph or two describing the workshop.

Late Papers

You have the option of turning in one assignment (except for the final draft of the research paper) up to three days late without penalty. If you turn in an assignment more than three days late, or if you turn in a second assignment late, your grade on the work will be lowered by a third of a grade for each late day (i.e., an A paper that is one day late will receive an A-, two days late a B+, and so on; weekend days are counted in this total).

Turning in Assignments

Many of the assignments will be submitted over Blackboard. But I do request hard copies of both your short essay and your research paper. You can submit your hard copies in class, during my office hours, or to the English Dept. drop box in SS 1152.

Student's Guide to the Presentation of Essays

The English Department offers useful information about various technical aspects for essays, like handling long quotations, formatting your essays, and writing up a bibliography, at the following website:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/UofC/eduweb/grammar/guide.htm>

Plagiarism:

Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense. Consequences include failure on the assignment, failure in the course and possible suspension or expulsion from the university. Please refer to the following information and make sure you are familiar with the statement below on plagiarism.

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-2-1.html>

English Department Website:

For more information about courses, programs, policies, events and contacts in the Department of English, please go to our website at <http://english.ucalgary.ca/graduate>.

Writing support:

The Student Success Centre offers both online and workshop writing support for U of C students.
<http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>

Follow the Department of English on Facebook & Twitter:



Academic regulations and schedules:

Consult the Department of English's graduate website for courses, departmental deadlines, and other related program information at <http://english.ucalgary.ca/node/245>. Consult the Faculty of Graduate Studies Calendar for university and faculty regulations, dates, deadline, fees, and schedules, student, faculty and university rights and responsibilities. The homepage for the Faculty of Graduate Studies Calendar is <http://grad.ucalgary.ca>.

For registration (add/drop/swap), paying fees and assistance with your Student Centre, contact Barbara Howe at 403 220 5484 or visit her in Social Sciences Tower 1148 in the first instance.

For program planning and advice, contact Barbara Howe at howe@ucalgary.ca to make an appointment with Dr. Jacqueline Jenkins, Graduate Program Director.

Guidelines on e-mail Etiquette:

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/it/help/articles/email/etiquette>

Grade appeals:

Consult the following University *Calendar* link and request advice from the English Department office, SS 1152. Please note that "mere dissatisfaction with a decision is not sufficient grounds for the appeal of a grade or other academic decision."

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i.html>

Deferral of term work and final examinations:

Should you require an extension for completion of term papers or assignments beyond the deadline of five days after the end of lectures, an Application of Deferment of Term Work form must be completed. The University also has regulations governing the deferral of final examinations. See *Calendar*: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html>, <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html>.

Academic accommodation:

It is a student's responsibility to request academic accommodation. If you are a student with a disability who may require academic accommodation and if you have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre, please contact their office at 220-8237. Your academic accommodation letters should be provided to your instructor no later than fourteen (14) days after the commencement of this course. Students who have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre are not eligible for formal academic accommodation.

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/drc/>

Emergency Evacuation/Assembly Points:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints;>

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/legalservices/foip/>

“Safewalk” Program:

Campus Security will escort individuals day or night: call 220-5333 for assistance. Use any campus phone, emergency phone or the yellow phone located at most parking lot pay booths.

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/safewalk/>

Contact for the Graduate Student Association: <http://gsa.ucalgary.ca/>

Contact for Students Ombudsman’s Office: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds>

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is an extremely serious offence. Please read the following information carefully. The penalty routinely recommended by the English Department for documented plagiarism is failure of the course in which the offence occurred; academic probation is also routinely applied at the Faculty level. Suspension or expulsion can result from severe or repeated plagiarism.

The University *Calendar* states:

1. **Plagiarism** - Essentially plagiarism involves submitting or presenting work in a course as if it were the student's own work done expressly for that particular course when, in fact, it is not. Most commonly plagiarism exists when:

- (a) the work submitted or presented was done, in whole or in part, by an individual other than the one submitting or presenting the work (this includes having another impersonate the student or otherwise substituting the work of another for one's own in an examination or test),
- (b) parts of the work are taken from another source without reference to the original author,
- (c) the whole work (e.g., an essay) is copied from another source, and/or,
- (d) a student submits or presents work in one course which has also been submitted in another course (although it may be completely original with that student) without the knowledge of or prior agreement of the instructor involved.

While it is recognized that scholarly work often involves reference to the ideas, data and conclusions of other scholars, intellectual honesty requires that such references be explicitly and clearly noted.

Plagiarism occurs when direct quotations are taken from a source without specific acknowledgement, or when original ideas or data from the source are not acknowledged. Citing your sources in a bibliography is not enough, because a bibliography does not establish which parts of a student's work are taken from other sources. MLA (Modern Language Association) documentation or other recognized forms of citation must be used for this purpose. Advice on adequate documentation can be found at the following web sites:

<http://www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/>

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH STATEMENT ON PRINCIPLES OF CONDUCT

According to the University *Calendar*, (<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/j.html>)

“The University of Calgary community has undertaken to be guided by the following statements of purpose and values: to promote free inquiry and debate, to act as a community of scholars, . . . , to respect, appreciate, and encourage diversity, [and] to display care and concern for community”. The Department of English, like the university as a whole, is committed to a “positive and productive learning and working environment.” This environment is characterized by appreciation and encouragement of diversity and respect for the dignity of all persons: students, support staff, and faculty. The department will not tolerate unacceptable behaviour, such as threatening gestures, threatening or abusive verbal or written communication (including e-mails), or any conduct that “seriously disrupts the lawful education and related activities of students and/or university staff”. Any cases of such misconduct should be reported immediately to the department Head, who, depending on the nature and severity of the incident, may then take further appropriate action.